

Parsons Nursery, Fernow Experimental
Forest Well House
South side of U.S. Route 219, .25 miles
southeast of Parsons
Parsons Vicinity
Tucker County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-237-0

HABS
WVA
47-PARSON,
10-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS
WVA
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

PARSONS NURSERY, Fernow Experimental Forest Well House

HABS No. WV-237-O

Location: South side of U. S. Route 219, .25 miles
southeast of Parsons, Tucker County, West
Virginia

USGS Parsons Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 17.614362.4327398

Present Owner: Monongahela National Forest
Department of Agriculture
Sycamore Street, Box 1548
Elkins, WV 26241

Last Occupant: Parsons Timber and Watershed Laboratory
Forest Service
Department of Agriculture

Last Use: Storage

Significance: The Fernow Experimental Forest well house was
built in 1934 by members of Camp Parsons
Civilian Conservation Corps. It was a part
of the original administrative complex for
the Fernow Experimental Forest Branch
Station, a part of the Appalachian Forest
Experimental Station, headquartered in
Ashville, NC. The station was founded in
1934 and named in honor of the famed forester
Bernard Fernow. The staff of the
Experimental Forest studied watershed and
timber management on the nearby Elk Lick Run
watershed. This is the only experimental
forest in Monongahela National Forest. For
an overview of Parsons Nursery, see HABS No.
WV-237.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1934, is derived from Mary Gaudineer's photograph showing the bunkhouse and garage under construction in summer, 1934 (see WV-237-M-6). John King interview notes all the Experimental Forest buildings were constructed in one summer by members of Camp Parsons.
2. Architect: Neither architect nor landscape architect are known.
3. Original and present owner: Monongahela National Forest.
4. Builder: The Fernow Experimental Forest well house was constructed by members of Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Parsons for the Fernow Experimental Station Branch of the Appalachian Forest Experimental Station.
5. Original Plans: None.
6. Alterations and additions: The interior has been sheathed in plywood.

B. Historical Context:

The Fernow Experimental Forest Branch Station was founded as an outdoor laboratory in 1934. To administer and house on-site researchers, members of Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Parsons constructed four buildings along the bank of the Black Fork River on the west side of the Parsons Nursery Bottom, on Forest Service land, across the road from the southern most nursery plot. The Fernow Experimental Forest well house supplied water to the bunkhouse, garage and residence.

In 1941, the four Fernow Experimental Forest Station buildings were boarded up as research programming was suspended because of World War II. The well house was again used when research was reactivated in 1948. It continued to function as a well house until the Parsons Nursery Bottom was supplied with water from the Parsons treatment plant in the mid-1960s. Since then, the building has been used for storage.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The Fernow Experimental Forest well house is one of a complex of Forest Service buildings constructed in a simple, rustic, gable-roofed, style. Unlike its neighboring Parsons Nursery buildings, it has horizontal, painted lap siding on the first floor and vertical, painted siding on the gables. This building uses native material from Monongahela National Forest such as chestnut roof sheathing and follows the local convention of exterior diagonal wind-brace sheathing with herringbone, centered joints under the siding.
2. Condition of fabric: Structurally sound and in use.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: A one story, rectangular plan, this building is 8'-2" x 10'-2". It has no attic.
2. Foundation: 8" concrete poured concrete.
3. Walls: Exterior walls have wooden horizontal siding, 6" exposure. There are 8" corner boards with 1/2" bead. The foundation-roof height at the corner is 7'-5-1/2". The foundation-roof height at the peak of the roof is 10'-1/2".
4. Structural system: The wood frame is not exposed except at the eave overhangs and ceiling. The roof has "2x4" chestnut rafters on 19" with "1x6" chestnut roof sheathing. There is a "1x6" ridge board.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: Front concrete stoop is 2'-4" x 1'-3" with a 10" rise.
6. Chimneys: None.
7. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: The doorway has 4" jambs butt-joint to the 5" head. There is a 1/2" outer edge applied bead on the architrave. The pine, five-panel door is 6'-3" tall. There is a vent hole in the lowest panel.
 - b. Windows and shutters: There are no windows but two vents, one in each gable end. The vents are pressed metal, 18" x 12" with louvers. The vents have 4" jamb

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and head, butt-jointed with a 1/2" outside edge bead.
There is a 1-1/2" sill. There never were shutters.

8. Roof: The gable roof has two layers of asphalt shingles that have replaced the original sawn cedar shingles. It has "2x6" exposed rafter ends clipped on the ends but without fascia or gutters. On each gable end the "2x4" rake board is notched so that the "4x4" wall plate and "4x4" ridge piece extend. The "4x4" wall plate and the "4x4" ridge piece are beveled on the ends. The gable end overhang is 12-1/2", including the rake board; the eave overhang is 16".

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The rectangular building is one room.
2. Stairways: None.
3. Flooring: Plywood, unpainted.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plywood, unpainted.
5. Openings: Untrimmed.
6. Decorative features and trim: There is a plywood trap door access to the well. Modern, plywood shelves are on the north and east walls.
7. Hardware: The door hardware is plain brass-plated iron with two ball-pinned hinges and a plain, brass-plated iron knob plate with bevelled edge. There is a strap hasp and keeper with bolt loop. Hardware is painted white.
8. Mechanical equipment: There is neither heat nor plumbing. Wiring is Greenfield electrical cable with a ceiling, porcelain, screw fixture.
9. Original furnishings: None.

- D. Site: The building faces southwest, 237°30'. It survives on its original site, together with most of the original nursery structures and all the original Fernow Experimental Forest structures (see WV-237-7). There is a 2' wide flagstone path that leads from the door to the back door of the bunkhouse.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: None.

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- B. Historic views: Forest Service photographs, Monongahela National Forest Office, Elkins, WV; Mary Gaudineer photograph copies, Monongahela National Forest, Elkins, WV.
- C. Interviews: Dovie Fansler, 6-10-1989, Elkins, WV, Parsons Timber and Watershed Laboratory employee, 1964-1986; John King, 9-5-1989, Wanakena, NY, silviculture supervisor, CCC Camp Parsons, 1933-42; Dorsey Knight, 10-24-1989, Parsons, WV, Parsons Nursery employee, 1932-1951.
- D. McKim, C. R., Monongahela National Forest History, unpublished manuscript, November, 1970.

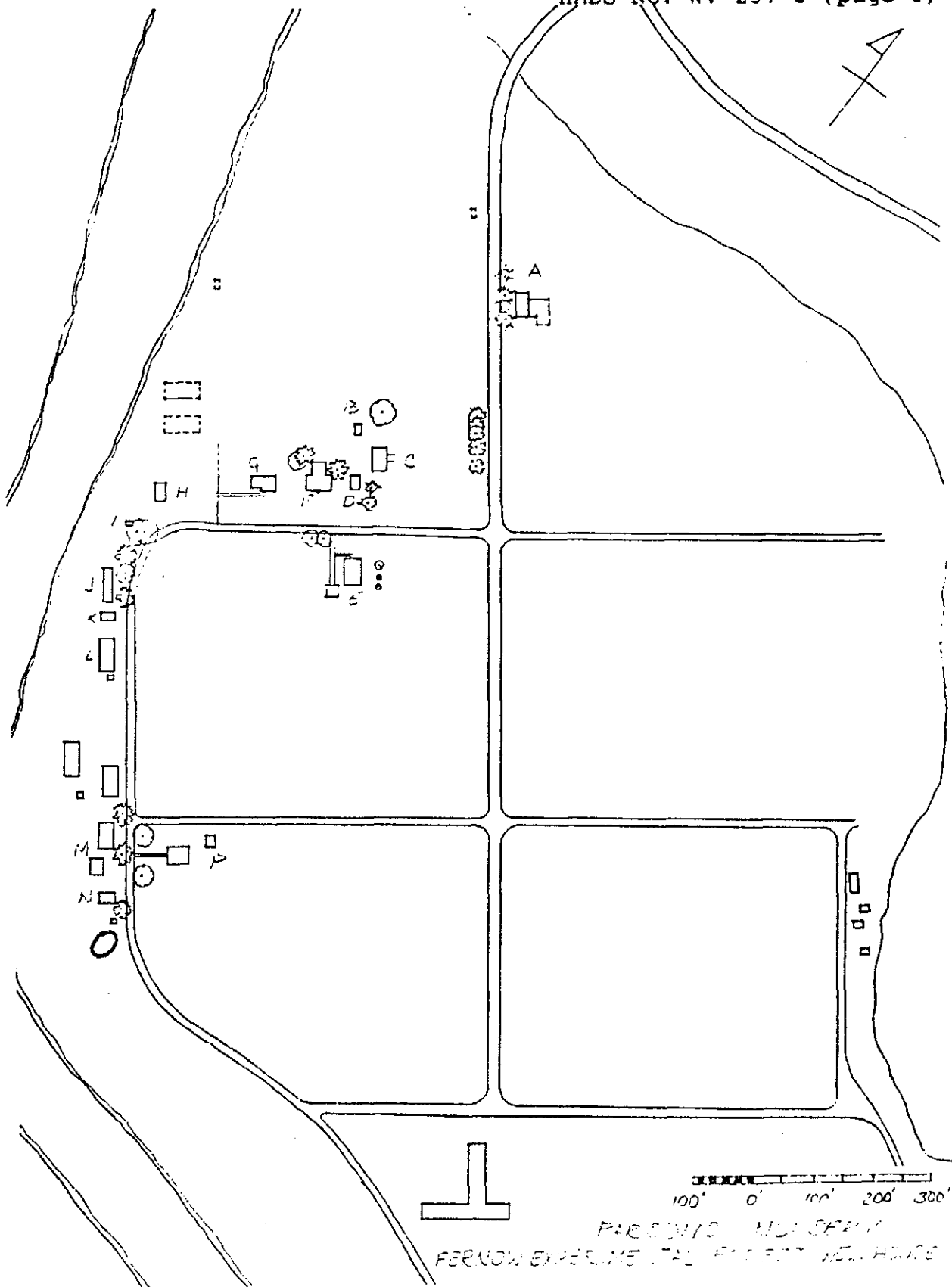
Trimble, George R., Jr., A History of the Fernow Experimental Forest and the Parsons Timber and Watershed Laboratory, Upper Darby, Pa.: Northeast Forest Experimental Station, 1977.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

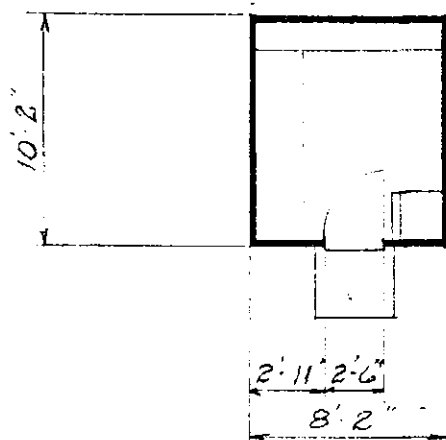
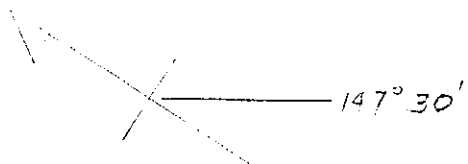
The architectural and historical documentation of the Parsons Nursery site has been undertaken to fulfill a memorandum of agreement signed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the West Virginia SHPO and the USDA Forest Service as part of requirements under regulation 36 CFR 800 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Recording has taken place prior to substantial modification and/or removal of structures damaged by a flood in November, 1985.

This documentation has been prepared by: Rebecca M. Rogers, Preservation Consultant, 44 Audubon Road, Youngstown, Ohio, under contract to Monongahela National Forest, April-November, 1989.

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